

Creating a captivating homepage is one of the most important aspects of designing a website. When you receive your website from SharpSchool it will come pre-populated with links and stock content. This content is provided as an example only and can be edited based on your organizations preferences. However, before you begin editing the homepage it is important to understand what can and cannot be edited on the page.

This tip sheet will direct you through the fundamentals of editing the homepage. The first section, Homepage Elements defines the various sections of a homepage.

Homepage Elements

The homepage of your site contains core regions of content. These are divided into the following section:

1. Navigation Bar

The Navigation Bar contains the primary links of your site.

2. Images

You can replace stock images with specific images from your school.

3. Welcome Message

This area is provided for authors to put text and information in.

4. Mini-Calendar

Highlights days on which your school has events and is connected to the main school calendar.

5. Upcoming Events

Publishes summaries of upcoming events based on information present on the main calendar.

6. Quick Links

Here, you have the ability to include important links around your site which are not available in the Navigation Bar.

7. News

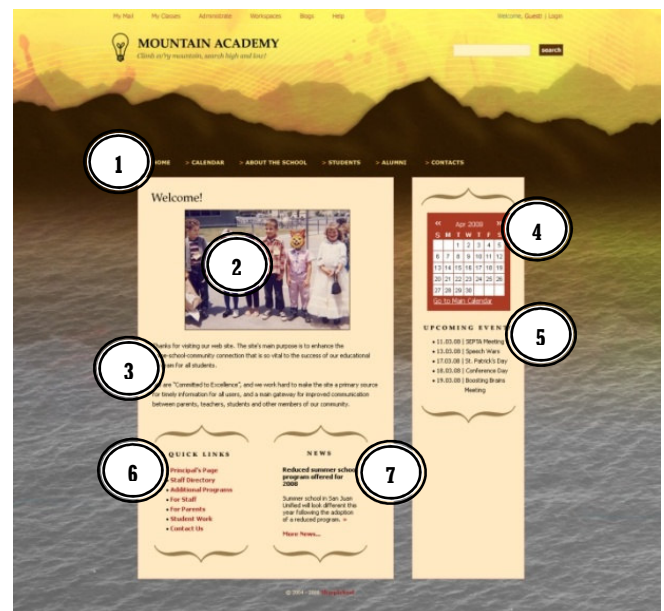
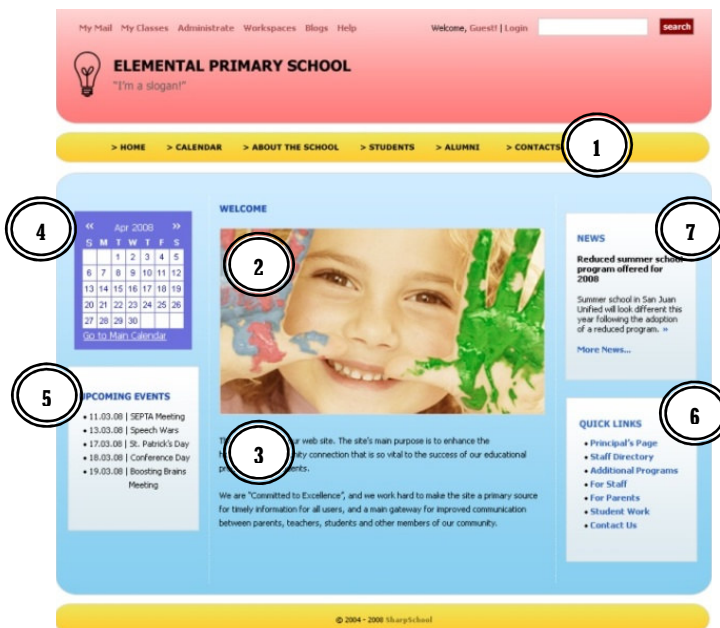
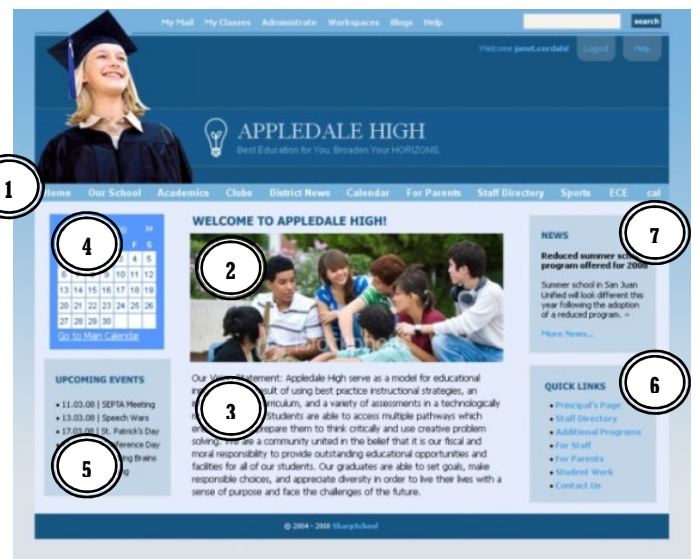
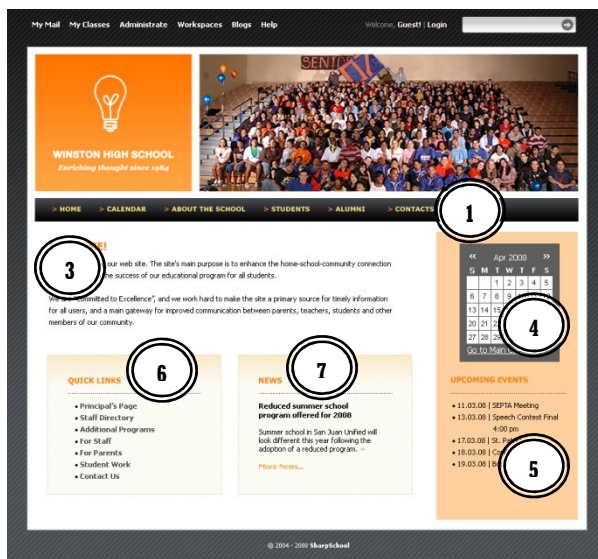
The News box automatically renders summaries from the News page on your site.

The screenshot shows the Winston High School homepage. At the top is the school logo and name, followed by a navigation bar (1) with links like Home, Calendar, About the School, Students, Alumni, and Contacts. Below the navigation bar are three large images (2) showing students and teachers. A 'Welcome!' message (3) is displayed, followed by a mini-calendar (4) for March 2008. To the left of the calendar is a list of upcoming events (5). Below the calendar is a 'Quick Links' section (6) with links to the Principal's Page, Staff Directory, Additional Programs, For Staff, For Parents, Student Work, and Contact Us. To the right of the Quick Links is a 'News' section (7) featuring a headline about a reduced summer school program and a link to more news. The footer contains the copyright notice: © 2004 - 2008 SharpSchool.

Template Variations

SharpSchool offers several templates for districts to pick from. Often these templates are customized with the specific school colors and logos. However, irrespective of the template selected all SharpSchool templates will contain the 7 core elements on the homepage. In many cases their location and look and feel will vary, but the functionality remains the same.

Take a moment to review your site and locate the 7 core elements before you begin working on the page. Below are a few sample templates that contain the core elements but their location and overall look is different.



As a content author you have the ability to edit almost every aspect of the homepage, however some exceptions apply.

What Can I Edit?



- All text on the homepage
- Links on the navigation bar
- Images on the homepage
- Links in the Quick Links box
- Number of events in the Upcoming Events portlet

What Can't I Edit?

- The color scheme of the site
- The banner on the page
- Background color of the navigation bar
- Background color of the dropdown menus.
- Background color of the mini-calendar

All the above are design changes that are controlled by SharpSchool and the site administrator. The design of your site is based on a configuration guide provided by stakeholders at your organization.

The following page contains a sample homepage that will be dissected to show you which regions are accessible by you and which region is controlled by SharpSchool. However, before plunging into your homepage, it is important to note the common Do's & Don'ts:

Homepage Do's

- Introduce your organization
- A few good images
- Create intuitive links in the navigation bar
- Use the Quick Links box

Homepage Don'ts

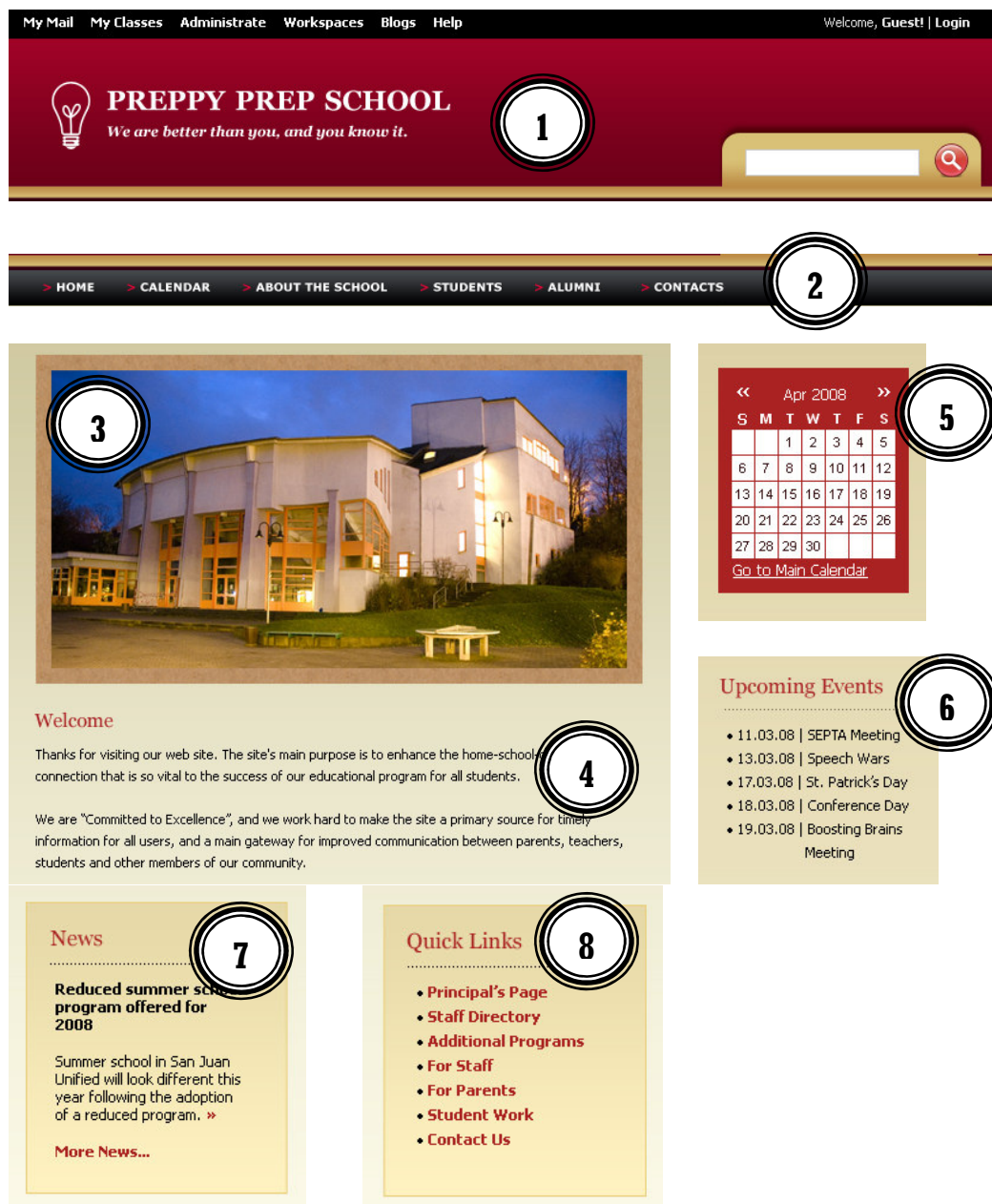
- Do not create several navigation links
- Avoid clutter
- Do not give permissions to many people to edit the homepage

Something to Think About



- It's a good idea to use images on your site that compliment the color scheme of the site.
- Insert a weather widget on your homepage to keep parents informed.
- Include a flash video on your homepage to add color and action to the site.
- Before adding links to the navigation bar create a hierarchy of your site on paper. This will allow you to visually see the flow of information on your site.
- Inserting links to other pages on your site is often better than publishing volumes of information on the homepage.

To Edit regions on the Homepage you must go to the **Advanced** option in the **Grey Menu Bar** and click on **Switch to Design Mode**. This will reveal the various *portlet* regions on your page that can be edited. To edit a specific *portlet*, simply click on the corresponding “Edit” button on the upper right corner of the region. For more information on *portlets*, refer to Chapter 1 of the SharpSchool Manuals.



The following points refer to the regions indicated on the sample template image.

1. The banner cannot be edited by users.
2. The color of the **Navigation Bar**, its fonts and dropdown color cannot be edited. However, the links and their order can be edited.

To add links, go to **Page Properties >> Add New Page >> Content Space Page**

To edit existing links, click on the link then go to **Page Properties >> Checkout/Edit Page**.

For more information on how to add and edit links refer to **Chapter 1** of the SharpSchool Manuals.

3. You have the ability to edit **Images**. Remember to **Switch to Design Mode**.
4. You have the ability to edit the **Welcome Message**. Remember to Switch to Design Mode.
5. When your site is provided to you the **Mini-Calendar** will already be linked to the main site calendar.
6. You can edit the number of events that are published in the **Upcoming Events** portlet.
7. Do not edit the **News** portlet as it is set on a default configuration when the site is handed to you. Refer to **Chapter 8** for more information on the News Engine
8. You can create the links in the **Quick Links** box. Refer to **Appendix A** of SharpSchool Manuals on how to create a hyperlink.